



# Vital Connections

Summer 1997

The newsletter for alumni and friends of the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto

## Nursing Students Take Home the Cressys!

On April 9, 1997, 118 students in their final year of studies at University of Toronto were presented with Gordon Cressy Student Leadership Awards at the home of President J. Robert S. Prichard. Gordon Cressy himself was on hand to read the citations for the Award-winning students, who received their personalized, framed certificates from the President and the Chancellor, Rose Wolfe. **Francine Wynn**, a Senior Tutor at the Faculty of Nursing, nominated the two winning Nursing students for this prestigious award, Ann E. Pottinger and Kavine Thangaraj.

One of **Ann Pottinger**'s special contributions to the Faculty of Nursing has been her willingness to help, encourage and give solace to her peers. Ann has served as Editor of *Nursing News*, and in recent months she has been a conference presenter at the Association of College Unions International; her topic was "Balancing School, Home and Family Life". Previously, Ann has been a Class Representative for the Nursing Undergraduate Society, served as a member of the Academic Appeals Committee, did a Work Study placement with the U of T Family Care Advisors Office, as well as volunteer at U of T Day. Ann has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to promote student participation in Nursing activities.

In her service to the Nursing Undergraduate Society (NUS) and many of its committees, **Kavine Thangaraj** has shown herself to be both caring and politically astute. This year her commitments included membership on



*Ann Pottinger, Dorothy Pringle, Kavine Thangaraj*

the Faculty Council Admissions Committee and the challenging role of NUS Community Fundraising Representative, where she organized the Nursing student contingency for AIDS Walk Canada and planned fundraising events in the Faculty for Street Health. She has also been active in the Nurses' Christian Fellowship, as a U of T Day volunteer and on the Orientation Committee. Kavine's Year IV clinical placement has been with the North York Public Health Department.

The Gordon Cressy Student Leadership Awards were established in 1994 by the University of Toronto Alumni Association (UTAA) and the Department of Alumni and Development to recognize graduating students who have made outstanding extra-curricular contributions to their college, faculty or school, or to

the University as a whole, combined with high academic standing.

In naming the awards after Gordon Cressy, former Vice-President of Development and University Relations, the UTAA recognized his commitment to higher education and his leadership in fundraising and community service. The qualities of leadership and dedication demonstrated by Mr. Cressy during his six years with the University are also embodied in the efforts of students chosen to receive this award — students who are committed to making a difference. One of the mandates of the Department and of the UTAA is to encourage and recognize participation in university affairs by alumni and students. Through the awards, they hope to foster student — and eventually alumni — involvement in the University.

# Report on Research Day

On April 16, 1997, approximately 430 people attended **research 97**, the Faculty of Nursing's annual conference. Participants were offered eighteen presentations, which covered studies conducted in the following categories: Women's Health, Health Promotion, and Professional Health, as well as four symposia with panel discussions. In addition, there were eleven poster presentations. Student registration accounted for 42% of all attendees, including a handful of students who travelled all the way from Newfoundland!

The keynote speech was the Nettie Douglas Fidler Lecture, which was sponsored by the Faculty of Nursing Alumni Association. This year's keynote speaker was Nancy Edwards, RN, PhD, an Associate Professor at the School of Nursing, University of Ottawa and Academic Consultant to the Ottawa-Carleton Health Department. Dr. Edwards was kind enough to provide the following summary of her speech for inclusion in *Vital Connections*.

## Meeting the Challenge of Creating and Sustaining Evidence-based Nursing Programs: Examples from a Community Health Nurse Practitioner

Many have made a case for evidence-based decision making in the health care sector. The National Forum on Health defines evidence-based decision making as "the systematic application of the best available evidence to the evaluation of options and decisions in clinical practice, management and policy-making and views evidence-based decision making as the foundation for an effective and efficient health care system". (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 1997)

While evidence-based decision making is a laudable goal, many forces constrain the development of evidence-based programs in community health.

## Transitions in Community Health:

A growing understanding of both multi-causality and the interplay among personal behaviour, collective action and

supportive environment interventions has altered our approaches to community health programming. This has produced substantial shifts in programs from lifestyle modification approaches to more broadly based programs that address determinants of health; from high risk approaches to population health initiatives; and from individually targeted strategies to group, collective and public policy interventions.

### Challenges:

The economic and political context for community health programs is changing rapidly. This increases the challenge of developing programs that are responsive to changing needs in the community.

Assembling and assessing evidence for decision-making in community health is challenging for a number of reasons:

- there is considerable lag time between when research is conducted and when research findings are available for program design;
- among stakeholders, there is disagreement and changing views about what process indicators and outcomes are important for community health;
- it is very difficult to assess which components or combination of components in multiple interventions make a difference.

### Sources of Evidence:

Many sources of evidence need to be tapped for evidence-based decision making in community health. These sources include research findings (both quantitative and qualitative), practitioners' experience and insights about what does and does not work, the experiences and insights of communities, and theory.

## Research for Community Health Programs:

The community follow-up of postpartum women and fall prevention for seniors are examples of research undertaken by Nancy Edwards which highlight how research can be designed

and how findings can be used in community health program development.

### Support for Evidence-based Programs:

Dr. Edwards concluded with a brief summary of ways in which we might support evidence-based community health programs. Programs of research, decisions aids for integrating and applying evidence, life-long learning and reflective practices, and participatory results-based management approaches were suggested. These call for intersectoral, interdisciplinary, interagency and interinstitutional links.

### About the Keynote Speaker:

Nancy Edwards is a community health nurse and epidemiologist. She has worked as a community health nurse practitioner, educator and researcher in various settings, including the outports of Newfoundland, rural Sierra Leone, West Africa, Pakistan, China, and Ontario. Nancy is currently an Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at the University of Ottawa. She is an Academic Consultant with the Ottawa-Carleton Health Department and Director of the Community Health Research Unit. Nancy is also the project director for two initiatives in China: (1) An institutional linkage project between Tiajin Medical University and University of Ottawa Schools of Nursing; and (2) a bilateral Maternal and Child Health project working with ethnic minorities in remote, poverty stricken counties in Yunnan Province, China.

Dr. Edwards' community health and research interests include preventing falls among seniors, working with ethnically diverse populations, and tobacco cessation. She received her BScN from the University of Windsor in 1974, her MSc from McMaster University in 1982, and her PhD from McGill University in 1995.

*Ed. note: If you would like to receive information about next year's conference, please call (416) 978-5627 to place your name on the mailing list.*

# Seat Sale A Success

A 2 for 1 sale is sometimes too good to be true, but how about a 3 for 1?

The 3 for 1 in this case is the offer from both the provincial government and the University of Toronto to match all gifts given or pledged before March 31, 1997, in support of endowments for student aid, effectively tripling the value of the contributions. And U of T's alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends responded with their enthusiasm and their pocketbooks.

At a wrap up celebration held at Hart House on April 15, President Prichard gave Education Minister John Snobelen the good news that more than **\$80 million** had been contributed to the University of Toronto for a student aid endowment fund. With an \$80 million match from the University and another \$80 million from the Province, more than **\$240 million** will be endowed, and will generate more than \$12 million in new scholarships and bursaries in perpetuity.

President Prichard praised the outstanding generosity of those who supported the campaign. "Our donors have made an incredible statement of support for students. This important initiative from Queen's Park demonstrates how a matching program can really work."

Commenting that the original, province-wide, target for student aid endowment was \$100 million, Snobelen was very impressed by the University of Toronto's success. "This \$80 million represents an incredible achievement. It's a real reflection of the value people place in the institution of the University of Toronto."

The Faculty of Nursing saw alumni, faculty, staff and friends contribute more than **\$150,000**, directed specifically for aid for Nursing students. With the matches, the **\$450,000** endowment will award bursaries and grants in excess of \$22,500 every year, doubling the amount currently available.

Both an undergraduate and graduate award were created by a very generous gift from the Perinatal Nurses of Southern Ontario. Nursing's faculty and staff members were also very active, pledging enough to create the Faculty and

Staff Award for a Nursing student. A very special award has also been endowed by **Dr. Nora Parker**, Professor Emeritus, a faculty member who retired in 1987.

Many thanks go out to all alumni who made gifts to the faculty through their Annual Fund donations. Your support is greatly appreciated and will go a long way to easing the financial burden on Nursing students of today and tomorrow.

## Program Profile: Career Day

The Faculty of Nursing Alumni Association sponsored our first Career Day on March 4, 1997. Initially, we wondered whether organizing a Career Day in this environment was an insurmountable task, but we were motivated to defy the challenging job market and show that there were opportunities for students. Participating agencies were enthusiastic, as everyone who attended either had a job to offer the students or was able to give them good leads to follow on acquiring skills, jobs or continuing education.

Lisa Pearlman, of Donner & Wheeler, gave an excellent presentation on self-marketing strategies and provided a sample cover letter and resume. Lisa's personable approach easily won the students over—most students made a point of attending her session.

Gabriel Ponikowski (Fastax Consultants) gave personal and business financial planning tips. In Gab's mind, RRSP is not just another four letter word.

Representatives from Special Care People, Spectrum Health Care, Saint Elizabeth Health Care, and MedHunters had current job openings for students.

Additional educational opportunities were provided by The Michener Institute (health care related courses), Nurses Education Enterprises (US Board Exam/Ontario License Exam preparation), and Kikawa College (Massage Therapy course).

Ruth Kumar, from the Canadian Institute for Nurse Advancement, was able to give insight and direction into international nursing opportunities, while Darlaine Peacock (Fletcher & Associates) spoke about independent nursing practice. And what would Career Day be without

our professional association? YES — RNAO provided a display as well.

All in all, the day went well, as students reported that Career Day was informative and that the representatives were approachable, encouraging and helpful. We look forward to planning this program for students again next year.

## Vital Connections

... is published by the University of Toronto Faculty of Nursing Alumni Association. The FNAA also supports scholarships and programs for both alumni and students. These are made possible through your gifts to the University of Toronto Nursing Annual Fund. Please consider becoming an annual contributor.

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## Dean's Message

The Faculty of Nursing had a huge agenda of new program proposals that it was designing and then marching through the approval process over the 1996/97 academic year. We have made wonderful progress so far and the dark circles under the faculty members' eyes are a testament to how hard people have worked to achieve this progress. The Faculty has discontinued admissions to the four-year BScN program and this fall will institute a new second-entry two year BScN program. This program is designed to admit students who have completed at least two years of arts and science, including a full course in human physiology and a half course in statistics. This program has now been approved by the Faculty Council, the Academic Policy and Programs Committee, and the Academic Board of the University, all unanimously. We will admit thirty students this fall and we anticipate that many of these students will have completed a degree in arts and science.

The Faculty has been offering a fast-track post-master's acute care nurse practitioner program since 1994. Our intention has been to move this preparation to a stream with the Master of Nursing program. This year a task force that included faculty members and nurse practitioners from a variety of teaching hospitals developed a proposal which has been approved by our Faculty Council and the Council of the School of Graduate Studies. This program will be implemented this fall. We are delighted that Mary McAllister (BScN 8T2), will be program director for the pediatric program. Mary will join the faculty in May and over the summer will develop the courses that comprise the pediatric nurse practitioner program. Beverley Simpson (MScN 9T3), will direct the adult program over the next year. Bev has been the director of the post-master's fast-track program since its inception and she will bring that expertise to the adult program. Meanwhile, Dr. Lisa Cicutto (MScN 9T2), who has recently completed her PhD in the Institute of Medical Science under the direction of Dr. Hilary Llewellyn-Thomas, is preparing herself as a nurse practitioner and will take over the adult program in 1998. We had thought that we would discontinue the post-master's fast-track program once our

master's program was established. However, many requests and inquiries indicate that there will be a continuing need for this post-master's program, so we will be developing a schedule for offering it over the next several years.

The third program that has been designed is a joint MN/MBA program that will be offered with the Faculty of Management. Professor Diane Irvine is the program director and this program has been approved by the Faculty Council in Nursing and the Faculty of Management's Council. It has been submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and we anticipate that it will receive approval there and by the Academic Board sometime in the fall of 1997. This is a three-year program in which students take courses from both Management and Nursing and graduate with both MN and MBA degrees. We anticipate that it will be of interest to nurses who are seeking senior administrative positions in health care organizations or wish to prepare themselves for private sector initiatives.

The other major initiative that we have underway is the restructuring of the Faculty. For many years now the faculty administration has consisted of the Dean and Chairs of the undergraduate and graduate programs. Interestingly, Nursing is the only faculty at U of T that does not have Associate Deans. Our new organization will consist of an Associate Dean for Education, and an Associate Dean for Research. An advisory committee has been struck to assist me in the selection process. Meanwhile, we have moved to appoint program directors for all of our new and continuing programs and these individuals will work with the Associate Dean for Education to deliver these programs.

Many of you will be aware that the International Council of Nurses is meeting in Vancouver in June. A number of faculty members and I will be going to the ICN. More interesting, a number of our students are going as well. Five undergraduates who are active in the Canadian Nursing Students Association (CNSA) are going, along with one graduate student. Our undergraduate contingent is among the most active on the Canadian scene and provides a great deal of leadership to the national organization. The students will help to staff our display at ICN.

The other major activities in June are convocation and Spring Reunion. Our undergraduate students convocate on

Friday, June 6 and our graduate students on Monday, June 9. The undergraduate convocation reception for the students and their family and friends will be held in the Quadrangle of Massey College this year because we have been displaced from Hart House by Spring Reunion activities. The graduate students' reception will be in the Quadrangle of Hart House. I hope that we will see many of you at the Spring Reunion brunch on Sunday morning, the 8th. For details about our brunch, call the Nursing Alumni Office, (416) 978-4786.

**So, what are you up to? New job? Just married? Won an award or written a book or anything else that former classmates might be interested in? If so, please let us help you spread the news! Please bring us up-to-date by attaching your Alumni News and Comments to this form then mail to the address shown below and we'll try to publish it in the next newsletter.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_ Graduating Year \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Please check off as appropriate:

I would like to be the class representative for my year  
 I am interested in volunteering with the FNAA  
 Attached is my News

Mail to: Faculty of Nursing Alumni Association, University of Toronto, 50 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H4

